

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 PER-01 MMO-01
ABF-01 /029 W

-----029536 180659Z /11

R 171019Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 273
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, EA, JA, APER
SUBJECT: INSPECTORS' RECOMMENDATION RE ASSISTANT LABOR ATTACHE

1. THE EA LABOR ADVISOR HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT ONE OUTCOME OF THE RECENT INSPECTION OF THE EMBASSY IN TOKYO HAS BEEN A RECOMMENDATION BY THE INSPECTORS THAT THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT LABOR ATTACHE BE ELIMINATED. THE LABOR ADVISOR BELIEVES THAT THIS POSITION IS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO THE PROPER PERFORMANCE OF THE DUTIES OF THE LABOR ATTACHE IN TOKYO, AND THAT THE TWO POSITIONS TAKEN AS A WHOLE ADD UP TO WHAT IS PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL LABOR FUNCTION REPRESENTATION IN THE WORLD. HIS REASONS FOR BELIEVING THIS ARE:

A. THE INCREASING AMOUNT OF JAPAN/U.S.A. ECONOMIC RELATIONS, ESPECIALLY TRADE, AND THE CONCOMITANT ENORMOUS BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEM WHICH HAVE CAUSED AN EXTREMELY LARGE INCREASE IN THE VOLUME OF LABOR AND LABOR EXCHANGE REPORTING.

B. INCREASING UNEMPLOYMENT IN JAPAN COUPLED WITH THE U.S. UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM AND THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS MENTIONED ABOVE HAVE RESULTED IN A GREATLY INCREASED NEED TO COMMUNICATE, IN JAPANESE, U.S. LABOR POSITIONS TO JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND TRADE UNION LEADERS. THESE PROBLEMS HAVE ALSO LED TO THE TRAVEL TO THE U.S. OF MANY JAPANESE TRADE UNION DELEGATIONS IN AN ATTEMPT

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TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE VIEWS OF U.S. LABOR, BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS AS PART OF THE JAPANESE PROCESS OF ARRIVING AT CONSENSUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND CARRYING OUT OF ECONOMIC POLICIES OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO THE U.S. THE DELEGATIONS NEED TO BE APPROPRIATELY BRIEFED AND THE DETAILS OF THEIR TRAVEL PLANNED AND COORDINATED.

C. CONCURRENTLY, THE NUMBER OF HIGH-LEVEL U.S. TRADE UNION DELEGATIONS TO JAPAN HAVE INCREASED AND ARE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO DO SO. THE DIRECTOR OF THE AFL-CIO INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT HAS STATED THAT THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT HAS CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE JAPANESE LABOR MOVEMENT THAN WITH ANY LABOR MOVEMENT IN THE WORLD.

D. THE JAPANESE HAVE BEEN ONE OF OUR MOST CONSISTENT AND HELPFUL SUPPORTERS IN ILO MATTERS. THIS SUPPORT HAS BEEN EXPEDITED AND FACILITATED BY THE LABOR ATTACHE STAFF. ALTHOUGH THE U.S. IS NOT NOW A MEMBER OF ILO IT'S ACTIVITIES ARE STILL OF GREAT INTEREST TO THE U.S.

E. THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT AT LEAST ONE OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES BACKED BY LABOR UNIONS MAY VERY SHORTLY, AFTER 30 YEARS IN OPPOSITION, GAIN ACCESS TO THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT THROUGH COALITION. THE ASSISTANT ATTACHE POSITION IS A LANGUAGE-DESIGNATED POSITION AND ONE OF THE CHIEF DUTIES OF THE INCUMBENT IS TO MONITOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND POLITICS. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF JAPANESE ALLOWS HIM DIRECT ACCESS TO UNION LEADERS AND POLITICIANS, VIRTUALLY NONE OF WHOM SPEAK MORE THAN A SMATTERING OF ENGLISH.

F. THE LABOR ATTACHE POSITION IS NOT LANGUAGE-DESIGNATED. THE PRESENT INCUMBENT HAPPENS TO BE THE FIRST U.S. LABOR ATTACHE IN TOKYO TO SPEAK JAPANESE FLUENTLY. THE INSPECTORS MAY NOT HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REALIZED THE RARITY OF THIS OR THE DIFFICULTY OF FINDING A REPLACEMENT WITH A FLUENT KNOWLEDGE OF JAPANESE. THE INCUMBENT IS, FURTHERMORE, AN UNUSUALLY ACTIVE, INDUSTRIOUS, AND COMPETENT LABOR ATTACHE WHO IS DUE TO BE TRANSFERRED IN ABOUT A YEAR. THE LABOR ADVISER DOES NOT KNOW OF ANY POTENTIAL REPLACEMENT WITH THE INCUMBENT'S ABILITY. GIVEN THE DIFFICULTIES OF GAINING A FLUENT COMMAND OF SPOKEN JAPANESE, LET ALONE WRITTEN, IT APPEARS CLEAR THAT THE DESIRABILITY OF HAVING A JAPANESE SPEAKING ASSISTANT LABOR ATTACHE IN TOKYO IS GOING TO BE EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IN THE YEARS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE VETERAN LOCAL EMPLOYEE IN TOKYO WITH WIDE BACKGROUND IN LABOR AFFAIRS AND GOOD INTERPRETING SKILLS WILL RETIRE IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO RECRUIT ANOTHER JAPANESE WITH COMPARABLE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE. THUS IT IS LIKELY THAT THE INCUMBENT ASSISTANT LABOR ATTACHE WILL SOON ASSUME CONSIDERABLE RESPONSIBILITY FOR INTERPRETING FOR THE AMBASSADOR AND FOR TOP RANKING LABOR VISITORS.

H. THE U.S. AND JAPANESE DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR ARE NOW ENGAGED IN DEVELOPING A PROGRAM FOR INCREASED COOPERATION AND EXCHANGE VISITS BY TOP-RANKING OFFICIALS. THIS WILL PLACE A CONSIDERABLE EXTRA BURDEN ON THE LABOR ATTACHE AND HIS ASSISTANT.

2. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS, HOWARD D. SAMUEL, HAS ALSO LEARNED OF THE INSPECTORS' RECOMMENDATION AND IS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO IT. HE INTENDS TO WEIGH-IN HEAVILY AGAINST IT SHORTLY AFTER HIS RETURN FROM THE NEW DELHI CONFERENCE. HE BELIEVES ALSO THAT IT IS CONTRARY TO THE UNDERSTANDING REACHED BETWEEN DOL UNDER SECRETARY BROWN AND UNDER SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT READ CONCERNING THE DOL EFFORT TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR FUNCTION. HE PLANS ALSO TO COMMUNICATE HIS VIEWS TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

3. THE LABOR ADVISOR REQUESTS THAT THIS TELEGRAM BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF DALE GOOD, S/IL
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INSPECTIONS, POSITION AUTHORIZATION, LABOR ATTACHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NEWDE04246
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780120-0606
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780355/aaaabtyr.tel
Line Count: 137
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4f8c17c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3291304
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INSPECTORS' RECOMMENDATION RE ASSISTANT LABOR ATTACHE
TAGS: ELAB, APER, IN, JA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4f8c17c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014